

"TOILER, CANST THOU DREAM?"

Totter, canst thou dream
At the dawn, at the dawn?
Higher heritage than kings
Hast thou?

Canst thou read in star or weed,
Answer to thy heart's deep cry?
Could not gem nor love's own crown
Do satisfy?

Totter, canst thou wait,
Through the storm black hour, alone,
Master of thy recreant will,
Dominant of fate?

Totter, canst thou trust?
From the dead stand and tell,
Though the tears come streaming, all—
All is well!

—Lulu W. Mitchell in Century.

A MAD RIDE.

A Philadelphian's Adventure on a Stagecoach.

A party of gentlemen composed of half a dozen prominent citizens were assembled recently in the smoking room of the Art club when the conversation drifted to modern traveling conveniences, and one of the number observed that while we had gained most marvelously in point of rapidity and luxury we had lost the poetry of travel as exemplified by the old fashioned coach, with its belled and caparisoned horses, its flourish of tasseled whip and the merry winding horn. The speaker was stopped by another of the party, whose face had signified his uneasiness at the description.

"Don't, my dear sir," said this gentleman, who is a power in the financial circles of Philadelphia. "Your reminiscence is very pretty, but your mention of the antebellum stagecoach revived a memory which is even yet a horror to me, though it is over 35 years old. I had an experience in one of your lauded vehicles once that afterward made me walk nearly 100 miles to keep from entering another, and to this day whenever I am unwell or troubled in any way I am sure to dream of the occurrence, and my wife, hearing me groaning, will awaken me, with the cold perspiration flowing from my body, and say, 'Dreaming again of your stage-coach fright, aren't you? And yet I flatter myself that I am not more cowardly than most men.'"

The company insisted on the story. It was given, as follows:

"As most of you know, my father's death followed close on the heels of his failure in business, leaving me, his son and only surviving member of his family, without a penny. I left college, but, wholly unfitted for any work, I found myself on the verge of starvation, so I left Philadelphia and started west, turned up finally in Virginia City. I was pretty desperate by this time and glad enough to accept an offer made me to drive the stage to Sacramento. It was not a long drive nor an unpleasant one, though in parts rather dangerous or at least requiring careful driving and steady horses.

"I had made several trips very successfully, when one morning I left Virginia City with a single passenger. This was a man of slight, delicate build, rather under-sized, too; dressed in heavy clothes, which struck me at once as peculiar, for the day was a lovely June one. Another thing impressed me disagreeably in my passenger—his eyes were a bright, unnatural blue, with something in their furtive glance that spoke ill for his conscience or his wits, though I did not think of the latter then.

"It was a very unusual thing for the stage to carry so light a load, and I found myself lingering a few minutes behind time to see if more were not coming, for I had a vague dislike which must have been a presentiment against setting off alone with my queer passenger. There was nothing for it, though, but to go, so I started, hoping to pick up others on the road. I did not, however, and gradually I lost my depression, though it was a lonely ride without any one to speak to, for, unlike most people who patronized the line, the man showed no disposition to talk or to question the driver, so after one or two attempts to draw him out I let my gentleman alone.

"After awhile, however, he began to complain aloud, though to himself, at my management of the horses, but I took no notice of his growling. We had by that time reached the mountains and entered on a narrow strip of road along the brow of a canyon, at the bottom of which gleamed a tiny thread of silver, which I knew to be the river. It was a sheer descent of 700 feet, and I usually checked the horses at that part of the journey. I had done this, when my passenger struck his head out of the window and demanded if I meant to keep up that funeral pace, but did not give me time to answer, and thrust out his hand with a revolver clamped in it.

"Get off that seat," he yelled. "I will drive myself!"

"I saw he would not hesitate to shoot me, so I climbed down with alacrity, when he advanced toward me and, threatening me still with the pistol, made me get into the stage.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked. "Well, I'm the devil, and I'm going to drive you to hell!"

"This speech and his looks, which were those of a lunatic, and a dangerous one, too, in his excitement, told me the truth, and I can tell you I felt the icy sweat break over me, but I climbed wearily into the coach and watched the madman mount to my seat. I could only hope that he would still retain wit enough to drive slowly, but the first thing he did was to bring the lash down upon the horses with a viciousness that made them start into a frenzied run, and then the maddest, most terrible journey a man ever undertook began. "The stage spun along like a crazy

top, the horses galloping wildly, springing wildly now and then to a cut from the shouting driver's whip, while, absolutely sick with terror, I had no strength to leap into the road, as I made up my mind to do time and again. I would undoubtedly have been killed at the rate at which we were going, and it was the bare shred of hope, which they say never wholly leaves us, that kept me from springing out. Part of the time I crouched on the floor, hiding my face in the cushions; but, fascinated by the terrible scene outside, I could not refrain from looking out upon it again and again. On one side rose a perpendicular wall of rock as bare as my hand. On the other and barely five feet from where I looked out were the canyon and certain death.

"The stage swayed fearfully, and every time the whip cut into the horses they would swing it to the very verge of the precipice, when I could look down the wall and see the river's gleam, when I would throw myself against the opposite side of the vehicle. Once the hind wheels literally hung over the edge for the thousandth part of a second, though it seemed an eternity to me, but was jerked on to the road again just as I felt the stage drag back into the chasm.

"I remember screaming like a frightened child and standing up in the stage laughing horribly when I saw the wheels back in the road. I doubt if the madman on the box was further off his balance than I at that moment. He was standing up, though how he could have retained his footing was a marvel to me, and yelling with delight, occasionally breaking out into a screaming song, varied by bursts of laughter.

"We had covered nearly five miles when the road widened several feet, and all at once I saw as we tore by the faces of a group of men drawn to one side to let us pass. I shrieked to them in a wild cry for help, but as our speed was undiminished made up my mind the noise we made had kept them from hearing me or that it was impossible for them to overtake us. But even as I despaired I heard a hoarse cry and, looking out, saw my lunatic's body hurled from his seat into the road and the next minute felt the horses checked and finally stopped. The door of the stage was flung open and a bearded face thrust in, when I threw myself into a pair of strong arms and knew no more.

"When I came to, I heard a voice say: 'Give the chap 'nother swallow o' the stuff, Jim. He's comin' to.' Some fiery liquor trickled down my throat, and, opening my eyes, gasping, I found myself surrounded by a crowd of roughly dressed men, but they, to my eyes, had the appearance of angels. They were miners, who, judging from the driver's actions, had guessed something of the truth and, hearing my cry for help, had stopped the stage. This was accomplished by two of them catching hold of and climbing up over the seat behind and over the top and thus reaching the seat, from which they knocked the madman and secured the lines.

"On examination the lunatic was found to be only stunned, when we bound him securely and took him back to Virginia City, where he was identified as a prosperous merchant from Carson City who had recently lost his mind through grief over the death of his wife. I joined my rescuers in their search for gold, and in six months we had struck it rich, when, selling out my share for \$50,000, I returned to Philadelphia, having had enough of the west and its adventures."

An Interesting Old Watch.
A curious treasure, a watch which belonged to Louis XIV, is preserved in the presbytery of Ragnonnas, in Avignon. The king gave away the watch under the following interesting circumstances: Before the building of the suspension bridge from Avignon to Ragnonnas a ferry was made use of, which from time immemorial belonged to a family by the name of Arnoux. A member of this family one evening 200 years ago took over a company of great noblemen and in so doing showed extraordinary skill. One of the gentlemen presented him in recognition thereof with a handful of louis d'or and also with a watch. "This man was Louis XIV."

This large, round watch, a masterpiece, has a silver case, which is so artistically chased that it resembles a fine spider web. On the lid is the bust picture of the king in laurel wreaths, held below and in the middle by two cupids. The dial, with Latin notations, has no hands. It is pivoted, and while turning the numerals come opposite a lily chased on the edge. The interior of the watch is of the same fine workmanship and the mechanism a marvel of precision. The watch is still attached to the same now faded cord with which 200 years ago Louis XIV took it from his pocket to present it to the ferryman of Ragnonnas. — Jewelers' Circular-Weekly.

Tales of the Finger Nails.
That the mental condition of a person who is suffering from some physical ailment may be judged from the condition of the finger nails was recently shown by Dr. Marco, an Italian physician, who has for some time been making investigations in this direction. According to him, a patient whose nails are not quite smooth, but contain many furrows, is subject to acute diseases, since it is the inability to take adequate nourishment, caused by such diseases, which makes the nails defective. He also maintains that a series of grooves will be found in the nails of those persons who are mentally unbalanced and especially of those who are periodically afflicted by some form of mental disturbance and that from a simple examination of the nails any skilled physician can tell how frequent and how violent the mental attacks will be.

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